Volume III.
Number 14.

Week of
June 1, 1942

Critics'

THEATRE REVIEWS

1942

INDEX

Stage Play	Pages
All in Favor	380, 381, 382
†All the Comforts of Home	280, 281, 282
Autumn Hill	314, 315, 316
Cafe Crown	370, 371, 372, 373
Candida	301, 302, 303
†*Comes the Revelation	278, 279, 280
First Crocus (The)	397, 398, 399
Flowers of Virtue (The)	354, 355, 356
*Guest in the House	336, 337, 338
Harlem Cavalcade	296, 297, 298
Heart of a City	346, 347, 348
Hedda Gabler	358, 359, 360, 361
Jason	377, 378, 379, 380
Johnny on a Spot	391, 392, 393
Johnny 2X4	326, 327, 328
*Keep 'Em Laughing	306, 307, 308
Kiss for Cinderella (A)	332, 333, 334
Lady Comes Across	388, 389, 390
Life of Reilly (The)	298, 299, 300
Lily of the Valley	365, 366, 367, 368
Moon Is Down (The)	318, 319, 320
Nathan the Wise	321, 322, 323
Papa Is All	394, 395, 396
Plan M	342, 343, 344
*Porgy and Bess	373, 374, 375, 376
*Priorities of 1942	339, 330, 331
Rivals (The)	384, 385, 386, 387
Solitaire	362, 363, 364, 365
*The Strings, My Lord, Are False	287, 288, 289
They Should Have Stood in Bed	349, 350, 351
*Uncle Harry	284, 285, 286
Under This Roof	339, 340, 341
Walking Gentleman (The)	292, 293, 294
What Big Ears	309, 310
*Yesterday's Magic	312, 313, 314

PRODUCTIONS CONTINUING

Reviews appeared in the 1941 CRITICS' THEATRE REVIEWS

Stage Play	1941 Vol. Pages
*Angel Street	182, 183, 184, 185
*Arsenic and Old Lace	417, 418, 419, 420
*Best Foot Forward	286, 287, 288, 289
*Blithe Spirit	237, 238, 239, 240
*Claudia	378, 379, 380, 381
*Junior Miss	211, 212, 213, 214
*Let's Face It	249, 250, 251, 252
*Life With Father	489, 490, 491
*My Sister Eileen	445, 446, 447
*Sons o' Fun	193, 194, 195, 196
*Spring Again	229, 230, 231, 232

** Asterisks indicate shows scheduled to play during the week of June 1, 1942*
† "All the Comforts of Home" opened Monday, May 25th, at the Longacre Theatre.
† "Comes the Revelation" opened Tuesday, May 26th, at the Jolson Theatre.

THEATRE REVIEWS IS A COMPLETE GUIDE AND RECORD TO THE NEW YORK SHOWS

Critics' Theatre Reviews brings you each week the complete reviews as they originally appeared in these New York papers

NEW YORK SUN
NEW YORK POST
NEW YORK HERALD TRIBUNE
NEW YORK NEWSPAPER "PM"
NEW YORK TIMES
NEW YORK DAILY NEWS
NEW YORK WORLD-TELEGRAM
NEW YORK JOURNAL-AMERICAN

Place this week's reviews with preceding weekly reviews so as to have always an up to date file of the New York Stage.

Published by

CRITICS' THEATRE REVIEWS, 235 East 22nd Street, New York, N. Y.

Yearly Subscription
$15.00

"Comes the Revelation"

NEW YORK HERALD TRIBUNE
May 27, 1942

Backwoods Preacher

By RICHARD WATTS, JR.

IT PROBABLY isn't the fault of the dramatist named Louis Vittes that his play is called "Comes the Revelation." Let us, at least, give him the benefit of the doubt. Possibly it wasn't his idea at all to bestow such a painful title on his work. Conceivably he even held out against the suggestion, storming and protesting bitterly that it was an outrage and a shame to inflict such an abominable appellation upon his unfortunate narrative. Maybe he is still indignant about it. The fact, however, is that his drama has arrived at the Jolson Theater without a change of nomenclature, and it is bad enough to be almost worthy of being known as "Comes the Revelation." A pseudo-satirical study of the rise of a backwoods prophet, its possibilities are wrecked by its general clumsiness and cheapness.

* * *

Although Mr. Vittes's play is an attempt to dissect the career of an early nineteenth century religious faker, with his dreams of political power, it passes a lot of its time attempting to be a minor version of "Tobacco Road." The combination is eminently unsuccessful. There are moments when it seems that the work is about to make a certain progress in its determination to probe into the strange soul of Joe Flanders, the backwoods boy with the twisted dream of power through religion, and to study the effect of his doctrine on the aimlessly lecherous neighbors about him. Then it wanders off into dull and pointless activities of one sort or another, and neither the man nor his work emerges with any kind of credible dramatic life. Neither as satire nor portrait nor folk study nor rowdy anecdote does "Comes the Revelation" prove in any way effective.

* * *

It is quite conceivable that there was the making of an interesting narrative in Mr. Vittes's general idea. He simply is not skillful enough to take advantage of any possible opportunities. For one thing, he rarely seems able to make up his mind as to his point of view about his dubious hero. The result is that his play, despite one or two moments of comparative interest, is feeble and futile. The acting is considerably less than distinguished, although Wendell Corey brings a touch of life to the completely unrealized character of the fraudulent preacher, and the Misses June Stewart and Audra Lindley at least provide some needed vivacity in the roles of two young women with somewhat lax morals. "Comes the Revelation" suggests that the drama season is not reaching any new climax, but at least it succeeds in the questionable achievement of living up to the quality of its name.

NEW YORK POST
May 27, 1942

"Comes the Revelation" a New Play at the Jolson Theatre

By WILELLA WALDORF

JOHN MORRIS CHANIN and Richard Karlan have reopened the Jolson Theatre with "Comes the Revelation," a new play by Louis Vittes which they are presenting at prices ranging from 55 cents to $1.65 except on Saturday and Sunday nights when the best seats cost $2.20.

A large cast boasting a number of names familiar to Broadway audiences performs lustily against a background depicting the Flanders' family cabin at Dorking, N. Y., in the year 1827, but the play itself is a sprawling, loosely hung together affair combining the duller aspects of sundry revivalmeeting dramas with certain crude features of "Tobacco Road."

The Flanders tribe, a shiftless crew with the morals of alley-cats, boasts of a son named Joe who turns from petty thievery and idleness to spell-binding the impressionable natives with the aid of a book purchased for a dime, advancing the theory that the American Indian is descended from the children of Israel.

Endowed with a vivid imagination and plenty of nerve, Joe goes about performing miracles and with remarkably little difficulty soon convinces a number of gullible farmers in the neighborhood that he is in direct communication with the Almighty.

Since the doctrine he preaches recommends, among other things, that local land-owners pay no taxes, he is pursued by the sheriff at one point, but the law is bought off by Joe's dazzled disciples. And when Joe's wife, who is not in sympathy with his tactics, burns the book from which he takes most of his texts, it looks for a while as if he is licked.

But in the end he is still swaying his congregation sufficiently to lead them off to Ohio to help swing a crooked real estate deal, and giving unmistakable indication that he is thinking of adopting the Morman system of several wives for each brother.

None of this seems particularly convincing as performed at the Jolson, although young Wendell Corey gives an earnest performance as the spell-binder, and Will Geer hits the bottle regularly as his father, an early nineteenth century Jeeter Lester.

We're all in favor of lower prices in the theatre, but unfortunately a poor play is just as bad at $1.65 as it is at $2.30.

NEW YORK TIMES
May 27, 1942

Golden Tablets

OUT of the tales of religious fervor which bubbled through New York State early in the last century, Louis Vittes has constructed "Comes the Revelation," and last night John Morris Chanin and Richard Karlan put it on at the Jolson, thereby restoring that house to the quasi-legitimate. Hinted beforehand as being a satire on demagoguery, it turned out to be another story of the young farm boy who hears voices and claims the receipt of the golden tablets, and it most definitely is not the final word on that subject.

Dorking, N. Y., and 1827 are the place and time, and Joe Flanders is the boy. With a bit of education, no great desire for farm work, and after an evening spent in a field with the daughter of a neighbor, he gets the Call. It tells him that the laws of the Lord, as revealed, are greater than the laws of New York State, as codified; it sends him into other pastures with his brother's wife, etc. Presently Dorking is doubting, but not for long, for Joe Flanders, wishing to lead his congregation west to Ohio, persuades some of them they have seen the tablets, and westward presumably they go.

Mr. Vittes has an idea, and there could be a play on the subject, if not this one. For part of the way he and the cast and the director, Herman Rotsten, are providing a would-be comedy; part of the way they are being serious. In the role of Joe's drunken father there is Will Geer, Rockland County's eminent defense horticulturist who served long as the Jeeter Lester of "Tobacco Road"; he is there to provide the laughs. As Joe they have Wendell Corey, who takes it all pretty seriously. Even in New York State long ago those two wouldn't have been of the same family. Wendell K. Phillips has the part of Grandpa, who sits in a rocking chair, looking peculiar, and Lesley Woods has the role of the unhappy Ellen Crale, who married, for worse, the angel of the Lord.

L. N.

NEW YORK NEWSPAPER "PM"
May 27, 1942

Farther North on Tobacco Road

By LOUIS KRONENBERGER

IF YOU don't care much for *Comes the Revelation* as a pun, better not inquire about it as a play. As a play, it commits most of the sins of the inexperienced playwright, when it is not imitating the flavor of an all too well-known one. Mr. Vittes has laid his play in the New York State of 1827, but the large and lubricous tribe of whom he treats has entirely too much in common with the Lesters of *Tobacco Road*. This similarity is perhaps heightened by the presence in the cast of Will Geer, who, as shiftless, drunken Pa Flanders, just goes on being Jeeter Lester in period rags; but the similarity goes deeper, and cannot be wholly accidental. But, instead of the racy degradation of *Tobacco Road*, there are only loud and clumsy snickers in *Comes the Revelation*; and the Flanders family manage to make sin about as dull as anyone else has made virtue.

Own Central Character

Mr. Vittes has a central character all his own, however, or at any rate one who is derived from Erskine Caldwell's *Journeyman* rather than from *Tobacco Road*. Even so, had Mr. Vittes been a more skilful playwright, he might have made something of Joe Flanders. Joe is a wenching, thieving, lying charlatan with an eloquent tongue, who sets up as a preacher and prophet and, with promises of the Lord's bountifulness, lures his crasser neighbors into the fold. But in spite of some noisy revivalism and a final splurge of mumbo-jumbo, Joe's finaglings—as well as Joe himself—are never very interesting. Mr. Vittes has no real sense of theater, no way of keeping a play within bounds, and only the most intermittent knack for dialogue. And with a tyro's prodigality, he has put enough people in his play for a $150,000 musical.

In the circumstances, the cast could hardly shine; but Wendell Corey gave a goodish performance as Joe, and Peter Hobbs, Lesley Woods and several others turned in perfectly acceptable ones.

"Comes the Revelation"

NEW YORK SUN
May 27, 1942

'Comes the Revelation,' An Earthy Drama, Opens at the Jolson

By RICHARD LOCKRIDGE

THINGS are very earthy up at the Jolson Theater, where a play called "Comes the Revelation" made a somewhat bedraggled first appearance last evening. Sex and religion are artlessly mingled in a fashion which might astonish Freud. Louis Vittes, the author responsible, is a man who believes in getting down to cases, or possibly a bit lower, and it is likely that he remembers how long "Tobacco Road" ran. Seven years, wasn't it?

His scene is a farm hut in New York and his time 1827; his characters are the members of the shiftless Flanders family and the villagers they annoy and defraud. Father Flanders is merely a drunk, in Will Geer's most realistic vein. But Joe, from small beginnings as a petty thief—he steals nightshirts from the neighbors' clotheslines—works up to found a new religion which is half mob hysteria and half cynical cheating. Mr. Vittes studies this rogue's progress with unrelenting zeal.

He revels in revival meetings and delights in the seductions in which Joe and his relatives and neighbors eagerly indulge. He points heavy morals, proving that if you are a preacher but not a sincere one your wife may leave you in the end and that you may have trouble with your flock. But if you are a flashy enough persuader, you may recapture your flock and lead it out into the wilderness, getting 10 per cent from rascals with plots of wilderness to sell. Mr. Vittes seems to regard such conduct as regrettable, but interesting.

Unfortunately, as he describes it, he is only half right. The clumsiness of his writing makes it difficult to believe in most of Mr. Vittes's people; he lacks both the perception of a thoughtful man and the skill of a good dramatist, so that his play has neither theme nor excitement. One is left feeling that it was written chiefly for the sensationalism to be got out of it, with the idea that plays which make people snicker will run forever. I fear that, for this purpose, Mr. Vittes hasn't been nearly shocking enough.

Mr. Geer's performance is rather disturbingly convincing; Wendell Corey plays the part of the religious demagogue with considerable force and a good many of the others seem to be doing as well as can be expected. There was a strong odor of glue in the theater, but the well informed assure me this came from the scenery. I had thought Mr. Vittes had been using it to hold his story together, but evidently I was wrong.

'COMES THE REVELATION'

A play in three acts by Louis Vittes; staged by Herman Rotsten; scenery by Ralph Alswang; presented at the Jolson Theater on May 26, 1942, by John Morris Chanin and Richard Karlan. The cast:

Benjamin Barney	G. Swayne Gordon
Ma Flanders	Mary Perry
Zachary Flanders	Peter Hobbs
Grandpa Crane	Wendell K. Phillips
Sophronia Flanders	Carroll Hartley
Joe Flanders	Wendell Corey
Pa Flanders	Will Geer
Orris Hockett	Grover Burgess
Oliver Sampson	John Thomas
Ellen Crale	Lesley Woods
William Garrett	Richard Karlan
David Garrett	William Thornton
Judy Garrett	Audra Lindley
James Q. Silsbury	Mitchell Harris
Grammus	George Leach
Lily Milland	June Stewart
Mrs. Barney	Sara Floyd
Mrs. Hockett	Mona Moray
Mrs. Garrett	Kathryn Cameron
Sheriff	Maurice Minnick
Sheriff's Deputy	Clay Turdin

NEW YORK DAILY NEWS
May 27, 1942

'Comes the Revelation' and a Popular Theatre Movement

"Comes the Revelation," drama by Louis Vittes. Produced by John Morris Chanin and Richard Karlan at the Jolson Theatre, New York, May 26, 1942.

★ ★

By BURNS MANTLE

THE young men who have taken the Jolson Theatre in upper Seventh Ave., the Messrs. John Morris Chanin and Richard Karlan, hope to establish there a popular-priced legitimate theatre that will appeal to people whose amusement budgets limit them to the 55 cents-$1.65 scale of prices.

They have begun their first season with a drama called "Comes the Revelation," written by Louis Vittes, which tells a story of a New York farming settlement that was swept by a variety of religious manias a hundred years ago.

Their company is capable, their production substantial and both their intentions and their ambitions highly commendable. But I fear they will not attract an encouraging amount of support with their first play.

Earnest But Confused

"Comes the Revelation" is an earnest but confused drama telling of a smart young hypocrite who capitalized the credulity of his neighbors by turning preacher.

He was, I gather, lightly touched in the head as his author sees him. An erotic youth, he could as easily have been edged into the church as into a planned deception of its more emotional communicants.

But after he had announced himself as one who had seen the light and been miraculously granted divine powers, his sincerity ebbed as his temptations multiplied. He went in for collecting bonuses and blondes, neglected his wife and wound up a first-class rotter.

Follow the movies and you will discover that it is not this type of story that appeals to those play-goers who seek amusement at popular prices. If the people's heroes cannot be noble they insist they should at least be fascinating. Neither the phony preacher nor any of his stage brethren is either in "Revelation."

Capable Cast

The performances at the Jolson are above average. Although the locale is that of Dorking, N. Y., in 1827, atmosphere and characterization are more suggestive of the stage South; there is more Tobacco Road than Old Homestead in this "Revelation."

Wendell Corey carries the burden of the erratic youth, playing with good enthusiasm and balanced judgment. Lesley Woods is admirable as the earnest wife he is unable to fool. Will Geer, who went through this sort of thing once before in "Journeyman," weaves characteristically as an alcoholic parent.

Contributing short parts are well played by Peter Hobbs, Audra Lindley, Carroll Hartley, Mary Perry and a half dozen others.

Herman Rotsten contributes a capable job of direction, and the setting by Ralph Alswang is carefully detailed.

NEW YORK WORLD-TELEGRAM
May 27, 1942

Comes the Revelation Is Presented at the Jolson

By JOHN MASON BROWN

THE title should be warning enough. For titles, even away from real estate, do matter. As a play's name, Comes the Revelation runs up a warning. In three words, rather than in Sam Goldwyn's alleged two, it spells "impossible." And impossible is precisely what Louis Vittes' drama proves to be during the course of what seems to be an interminable evening at the Jolson.

Mr. Vittes is writing about the dangers of having a young man, without conscience, turn evangelist. He is an evil fellow, Mr. Vittes' hero; a liar and a thief who pretends to have had a vision and fallen heir to some gold-backed holy books presented to him by the Lord. Thereafter he employs his stumbling eloquence as a means to collect money from his credulous followers, to buy up land in the distant village where he hopes to move them, and to do somewhat more than dabble in sex. His talents for persuasion, in other words, outdistance his religious gifts, as Mr. Vittes proves by showing him before and behind the curtain of his revival meetings, and by having him desert his own wife to become the father of his sister-in-law's child.

* * *

When the curtain goes up on Comes the Revelation, and a rustic kitchen is disclosed, with Ma busying herself about the peelings, and a half-wit sister giggling in her gingham in the corner, and the booted boys of the household sprawling in the easy chairs, you could swear you were keepin' company with a Kentucky mountain play. But, no Suh. Mr. Vittes has at least had the consideration to pack his old dramatic furniture up North and to place his scene in New York's upstate Bible belt in the year 1827.

When you realize this, it helps a little. Not much, but still a little. It would help more if only the play, so transplanted, were even mildly interesting; and if only, like a magician whose gifts were limited to pulling dead rabbits out of a hat, the scenes it did produce did not seem like dull travesties both of Bride of the Lamb and Tobacco Road.

* * *

Will Geer gives his same old conscientiously overripe performance as one of those Roquefort characters which appear to be his lot. And Wendell Corey, as the evil evangelist, demonstrates exceptional abilities. Mr. Corey is a young player who has power, much authority and dignity. But the evening as a whole is one of those evenings which can mar the spring on Broadway and lessen one's grief at saying farewell to the theater for a summer. This means it is very, very bad, indeed.

"Comes the Revelation"

NEW YORK JOURNAL-AMERICAN
May 27, 1942

'Comes Revelation' Opens at the Jolson

Louis Vittes' Play Pictures Religious Mania in New York State in 1827

By JOHN ANDERSON

WITHIN the limits of the dimout and the ability of a new playwright the Messrs. Chanin and Karlan relighted the long disused Jolson Theatre at Seventh Ave. and Central Park last night and there presented Louis Vittes' new play "Comes the Revelation" at what are politely known in the trade as popular prices. I hope the prices will be more popular than free passes seemed to be among some of the critics, who up-aisled it and left, but I have my doubts.

For while Mr. Vittes is an earnest author his work is somewhat unsteady and inclined in its sultrier moments to be laughably lurid. His study of religious mania in the New York State "Miracle Belt" in the year 1827 suggests the usual mixture of sex and salvation, but it does so, I fear, in terms which would please neither church nor play-goers, in case there is any difference. There were moments when it sounded as if "Tobacco Road" had merely moved its turnips, its genders, and even its accents from backwoods Georgia to backwoods New York, skipping a century en route.

The Lost Tribes

But Mr. Vittes' chief interest is neither in Pappy, nor in grandpappy, but in sonny Joe Flanders, a preachin' sort of young man who bought a book for a dime about the Indians being the lost tribes of Israel and set up a new sect on this revelation. He pretended the word had been given to him on tablets of gold, and he needed money to copy them off into a new Bible.

His wife objected to his fakery and even more to the extra-marital rights he assumed as the privilege of a true prophet, so she left him just as he hornswoggled "the faithful" into believing in his phony testament.

As a study in human credulity and self-hypnosis the subject at least is above the level of the season's run of trash, but Mr. Vittes has been unable to express it in sound dramatic terms. The theme is stated so loosely that the play is over-long in getting started, and even then the scenes seem to move away from the central figure, to dwindle to miscellaneous action, and leave the play without a coherent dramatic structure.

Slow to Emerge

Though he is somewhat slow and uncertain in emerging as the play's main character Joe Flanders is played with a shrewd blend of knavishness and self-starting religious ecstasy by Wendell Corey. As a hokum prophet he is half-taken in by his own talk, and Mr. Corey expresses admirably the peculiar mixture that is part zealot and part liar. Will Geer translates a rancid and drunken old galoot into the vividly explicit but pediculous terms of his most searching, not to say scratchiest performance, and Peter Hobbs and Lesley Woods are helpful in smaller parts.

Ralph Alswang's single setting of a backwoods cabin seemed picturesque and accessible, and I hope the remark will be taken as I mean it when I say it smelled to high heaven. A matter of undried glue, or sizing, I suppose, though some fine-nostrilled departers tried to pretend it was the play and followed their lifted noses to the street.

"All the Comforts of Home"

NEW YORK DAILY NEWS
May 26, 1942

50-Year-Old Farce Revived by Slightly Bewildered Players

"All the Comforts of Home," farce by William Gillette, revived by Edith C. Ringling and Mollie B. Steinberg at the Longacre Theatre, New York, May 25, 1942.

★+

By BURNS MANTLE

"ALL THE COMFORTS OF HOME" is a farce that William Gillette adapted from the German original of Carl Laufs more than fifty years ago. It was revived last night at the Longacre theatre. Why, I would not know.

In its day it was celebrated as one of the first comedies to be played in a boxed-in set with doors solid enough to slam without shaking the walls that supported them.

In the Fall of 1890 it was played at Proctor's 23d St. Theatre in New York by a company that included the late Henry Miller as Alfred, the juvenile hero, and Maude Adams as Evangeline, the ingenue.

It was revived some ten years after that, and during the time resident stock companies flourished across the country it was always being played somewhere.

Minor Mystery

Still I do not understand why Edith Ringling and Mollie B. Steinberg wanted to revive it this Spring of 1942. I don't believe it would be funny today, even with Abbott and Costello cast in the Miller-Adams roles.

Maybe the Misses Ringling and Steinberg thought they could sell it to the suburban circuits and the soldier camps, after its Broadway introduction. Maybe they can. It is no bargain on Broadway, even at semi-popular prices.

"All the Comforts of Home" is the one about the suspicious husband who takes his attractive second wife and his first wife's daughter away from home because he thinks the wife is deceiving him.

New Version

While he is gone his impecunious nephew rents out rooms to a farcical assortment of comedy characters, resulting in situations that have since become standard in farce.

Helen Jerome is credited with having modernized the old piece, and maybe she has improved it. I wouldn't know about that, either. I find some little satisfaction in believing, however, that the original Gillette version, stuffed with asides and awkward audience confidences though it may have been, was better than this.

The Ringling money has been generously spent in building another solid Harry Bennett set, with more doors to slam, and in costuming the company smartly in period gowns by Paul Du Font.

Dorothy Sands and Nicholas Joy let themselves go with appropriate abandon in leading roles, and Oliver B. Prickett, after considerable comedy success at the Pasadena Playhouse, has come on to try his luck on Broadway. The laughing sections of last night's audience thought he was pretty funny.

Celeste Holm lends enthusiasm, blonde beauty, a practical singing voice and flirtatious hips to a siren role; Gene Jerrold of the Cleveland Playhouse does the juvenile creditably and the others included Florence Williams and Wallace Acton.

"All the Comforts of Home"

NEW YORK SUN
May 26, 1942

'All the Comforts of Home,' Aged Farce, Is Revived at the Longacre

By RICHARD LOCKRIDGE

UTTERLY incomprehensible things can happen in the theater. Last evening, for example, a farce written by William Gillette half a century or so ago was revived at the Longacre Theater—was hauled out of its decent resting place and sent to cracking its antique joints and its antique jokes and in general making a palsied fool of itself. There should be a society for the prevention of cruelty to aged plays.

It is unlikely that "All the Comforts of Home," which is the name of this refugee from the old dramas' home, was ever anything but a very foolish farce. It is true that Maude Adams once acted in it; it may be true that it once made people laugh. But we should draw a veil over the follies of our fathers and not thus make mock of them. Now "All the Comforts of Home" is merely ridiculous and rather embarrassing. It would be unkind to laugh at it. Fortunately the temptation to laugh does not arise.

It tells, if that matters, of the escapade of one Alfred Hastings, who, left to guard his uncle's London mansion, fills it full of improbable roomers. The complications are both too numerous and too dull to mention, including as they do an elderly roue with a watchful wife, a singer named Fifi Oritanski, a thirsty musician named Christopher Dabney and a bottle of champagne which pops out of turn and gurgles drearly as it is poured.

A good many actors who deserve better of life are rather horribly antic in "All the Comforts of Home." You will be sorry to hear that they include such amiable and expert players as Nicholas Joy, Dorothy Sands, Oliver B. Prickett and Celeste Holm. You will, if you admire and respect the theater, be sorry that any of this was allowed to happen.

'ALL THE COMFORTS OF THE HOME'

A farce in two acts by William Gillette; revised by Helen Jerome; staged by Arthur Sircom; setting by Harry G. Bennett; costumes by Paul duPont; revived at the Longacre Theater on May 25, 1942, by Edith C. Ringling and Mollie B. Steinberg. The cast:

Alfred Hastings	Gene Jerrold
Tom McDow	Oliver B. Prickett
Theodore Bender, Esq.	Nicholas Joy
Josephine Bender	Dorothy Sands
Evangeline Bender	Florence Williams
Mr. Egbert Pettibone	William David
Rosalie Pettibone	Grace McTarnahan
Emily Pettibone	Peggy Van Vleet
Christopher Dabney	Wallace Acton
Judson Langhorne	Guy Spaull
Fifi Oritanski	Celeste Holm
Augustus McSnath	Percy Helton
Victor Smythe	Stuart Lancaster
Thompson	Richard Stevens
Katy	Virginia Runyon
Gretchen	Jordie McLean
Bailiff	John Regan

NEW YORK JOURNAL-AMERICAN
May 26, 1942

'All the Comforts of Home' at Longacre

Dorothy Sands and Nicholas Joy Appear in Gillette's Farce of 50 Years Ago

By JOHN ANDERSON

WHEN a farce grows old and loses its laughter it deserves a little quiet privacy and quiet privacy is what I imagine the Longacre Theatre is going to be full of while the revival of "All the Comforts of Home" holds the boards. It began holding them, somewhat tremblingly, last night.

Age, of course, is not necessarily the destroyer of farce. "Charley's Aunt," which is the junior of "All the Comforts of Home" by a couple of years, was going fine when last heard from. But my guess is that "All the Comforts, etc." wasn't so terribly good 50 years ago on its first production in New York when a brilliant young matinee idol flashed across Broadway in it, and persuaded William Gillette, who had adapted it from the German, to add a little bit to the part of the young girl.

The star then was Henry Miller, Gilbert Miller's father, and the young actress who made her first New York appearance in it was Maude Adams. Since I was not even toddling around in those days I have only Kelcy Allen's word for it that people laughed easily then. In any case they laughed enough to keep the play on for quite a run, and to bring about a revival with William Faversham a few years later.

Another Mystery

Why anyone should think of reviving it now must remain one of the deeper mysteries of an already mysterious season. Its period antics about a young man who turns his uncle's London home into a rooming house while the family is away provides plenty of presumably humorous situations. Actors rush in and out on the time-honored errands of farce, slam doors, ring bells, peep through transoms and engage themselves in the routine mechanics of mistaken identity.

These exercises may have led worthy folks to laugh 50 years ago until they were fit to kill, but before a set of iron-faced Nineteen-Forty-Two'ers the jokes seemed mummied, the situations obvious, and the farcical mainspring broken. The only good laugh I heard was during an intermission when word got around that someone, probably Russel Crouse, had dubbed "Yesterday's Magic," Mr. Muni's present vehicle, "The Muni's Down." Fifty years from now even this joke may have lost its point, and I trust that no one will try to revive it, either.

If It Caves In

It is, of course, proper for actors in farce to take on a certain distracted look as if the earth had just caved in under them. But the players at the Longacre seemed to have the further fear that their play had caved in also. Only Dorothy Sands and Nicholas Joy suggested the resolute force and comic vehemence to play on against dead lines, dull situations and general apathy in the high, swift extravagance of farce acting.

I do hope that Broadway isn't so confused over gas rationing that it thinks any old motorless vehicle will do. If it comes to that a play ought to run as naturally as a horse, since that's what they are both for.

NEW YORK WORLD-TELEGRAM
May 26, 1942

An Old Farce by Gillette Is Revived at the Longacre

By JOHN MASON BROWN

THE world's anguishes are far too numerous just now to add to them by reporting at great length on William Gillette's old farce, All the Comforts of Home, which for obscure reasons was revived at the Longacre last night. Certainly the universe was younger when first this adaptation from the German won favor 50-odd years back. The play, which relates the misadventures of a young man who, in his rich uncle's absence, turns his uncle's home into a boarding-house, is proof enough of change. A change for the better, if you ask me.

Our stage may have been more innocent in those dear dead days which are so fortunately beyond recall, and which the gray-beards like to speak of as the good old days. But when we are confronted with it today we can find no more consolation in the theatrical innocence *per se* of our grandparents than, as Clifton Fadiman has recently pointed out, our soldiers in the Pacific can be cheered by being told that Washington's troops at Valley Forge were ill-shod. Sufficient unto the day, etc. And nothing, when seen through contemporary eyes, could be more soporific or more tedious than all the silly lines and sillier subplots of Mr. Gillette's old farce.

* * *

Fifty years from now, Three Men on a Horse, You Can't Take It with You or My Sister Eileen will, no doubt, if removed from their graves, refuse as stubbornly to slip out of their winding sheets. My one hope is that no body-snatchers will disturb them in a peace which by then will have earned the right to be eternal.

Although Dorothy Sands as the shrewish wife in many engaging Gay Nineties costumes, and Nicholas Joy as her hen-pecked husband with the roving eyes, command the difficult art of farcing in the antique style, the others seem as lost as Miss Sands and Mr. Joy are wasted. It is impossible to blame any of them. Although the others yell and scamper and romp with desperate energy, their caperings are for the most part melancholy enough to make an undertaker look to his laurels.

* * *

Perhaps, as someone has suggested, if Helen Jerome, in her revision had left the original "asides" in the script, it could at least have taken on the period qualities which are now only half-heartedly indicated. I doubt it. The fairest thing seems to be just to forget all about the whole affair; to call it off and distribute no rain checks. Incidentally, there was a dog on the stage last night who had the best idea of all. He could have served many of us as our proxies. Cur that he was, he was always straining at the leash to run out, and get the whole grim proceedings behind him. I don't remember him in the Critics Circle, although others may. But I would like to propose him for membership. He is critic enough to know the difference between Charley's Aunt and Charley's Stepsister.